



Rape and Sexual Assault in Massachusetts, 2004-2005

Incidents Reported by Survivors Who Seek Help from Rape Crisis Programs

In Massachusetts an estimated 22% of women and 7% of men experience sexual assault in their lifetime.ⁱ To respond to the needs of survivors of sexual violence, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) funded 17 local Rape Crisis Centers (RCCs) across Massachusetts, as well as a statewide Spanish language helpline. The information below is a summary of data collected by these programs over a one-year time period.

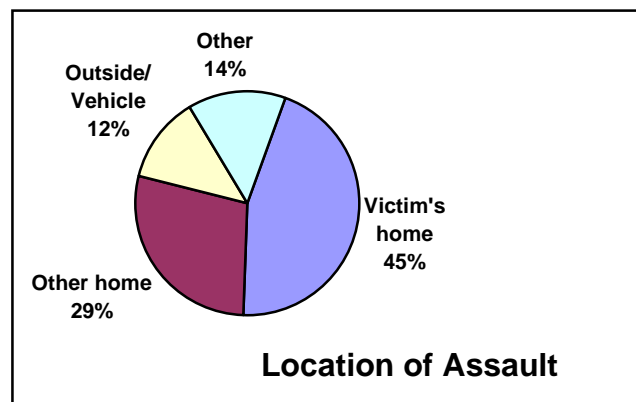
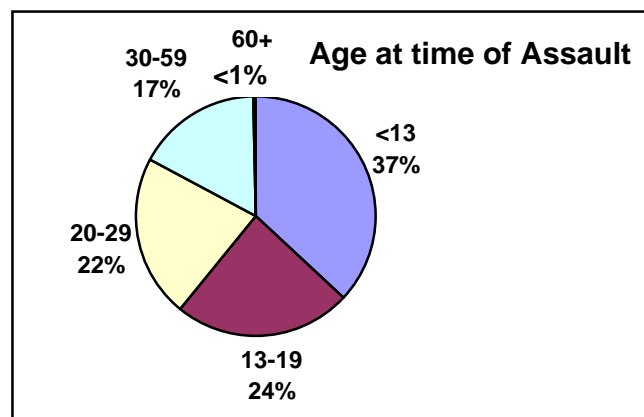
From July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005, trained rape crisis counselors from MDPH-funded RCCs and the statewide Spanish language helpline **responded to over 11,000 hotline calls**; over 8,000 of these were from survivors.ⁱⁱ In addition to information on the number of hotline calls received, counselors also collect information on incidents of sexual assault that are reported to them during the course of providing services. The primary purpose of hotline counselors is crisis intervention; as such, counselors complete data forms to the best of their ability, but data may be incomplete. The extent of missing data on a particular question is noted in the text. RCCs and the statewide Spanish language helpline received 2,691 unduplicated reports of sexual assault. Of these reports, 1,927 were made directly by survivors. The data presented below detail these reports from survivors only.

Among the survivors who reported to RCCs and the Spanish language helpline:

- **94%** were female, of 91% who provided information on their gender;
- Age at the time of assault ranged from 1 year to over 60 years, of 87% of callers who provided information on their age;ⁱⁱⁱ
- **44%** of victims reported **injuries** in addition to the sexual assault, of 48% who provided information on additional injuries;
- **Over a third (34%) reported** having a **disability**, of 49% who provided information on disability status at the time of the report.

Circumstances of the assaults:

- **Weapons** were reported to have been used in 14% of assaults, of 45% in which information was provided on weapon use;
- **Almost half** of sexual assaults reported **occurred at the victim's home**, of 67% in which information was provided on location of assault.



Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Center for Community Health ♦ Division of Violence and Injury Prevention

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<http://www.mass.gov/dph/fch/dvip.htm>

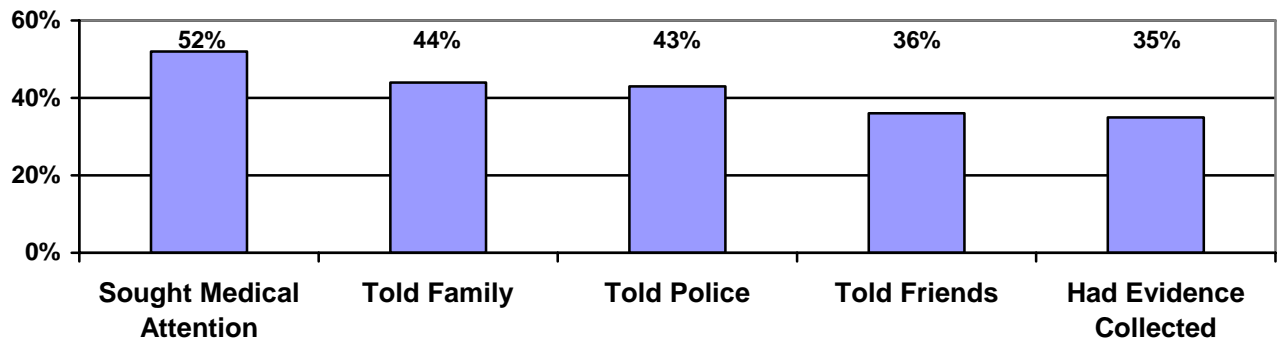
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Sexual Assault Perpetrators:

- Survivors reported that **friends and acquaintances** committed 34% of assaults, followed by 23% **current or ex-spouses or partners, dates, boyfriends/girlfriends**; 17% **parents, step-parents, siblings, or other relatives**; 14% **strangers**; and 11% other perpetrators, of 78% of assaults in which information was provided on victim-perpetrator relationship;
- Based on survivor reports, **younger victims** were more often victimized by **parents, caretakers, siblings and other relatives**, while **adult victims** were more often victimized by **current and former partners, dates, and boyfriend/girlfriends**, or by **friends and acquaintances**;
- Men committed 95% of reported sexual assaults**, of 78% of assaults in which information was provided on perpetrator gender.

Survivors who also sought other help:

- Some survivors **told family (44%), friends (36%), and/or police (43%)**, of 66% who provided information on reporting to others;
- 52%** sought **medical attention**, of 69% who provided information on medical attention;
- 35%** had **forensic evidence collected**, of 68% who provided information on evidence collection.



If you need help please contact your local rape crisis center.

See attached list for resources.

Data Collection and Limitations

Data contained in this report are reported to Rape Crisis Centers by survivors. Providing support and information to survivors is a priority of RCC counselors, over data completion. For more information about sexual assault-related data, please see the Sexual Assault Prevention and Survivor Services website at: <http://www.mass.gov/dph/fch/sapss/>.

ⁱ Commonwealth of Massachusetts. A Profile of Health Among Massachusetts Adults, 2003. Boston, Massachusetts: Health Survey Program, Center for Health Information, Statistics, Research, and Evaluation, Department of Public Health.

ⁱⁱ Hotline services are provided for survivors, family and friends, and professionals for support and resource referrals. Survivors may call the Hotline multiple times or may prefer to discuss the assault in face-to-face counseling rather than on the hotline, thus the number of calls to the hotline is a measure of service use and is not a measure of sexual assault incidents reported to DPH-funded RCCs.

ⁱⁱⁱ Many survivors do not contact RCCs immediately after they are assaulted but may seek services later in life. Data on age at time of assault is collected in order to illustrate the demographics of victims as accurately as possible.

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